

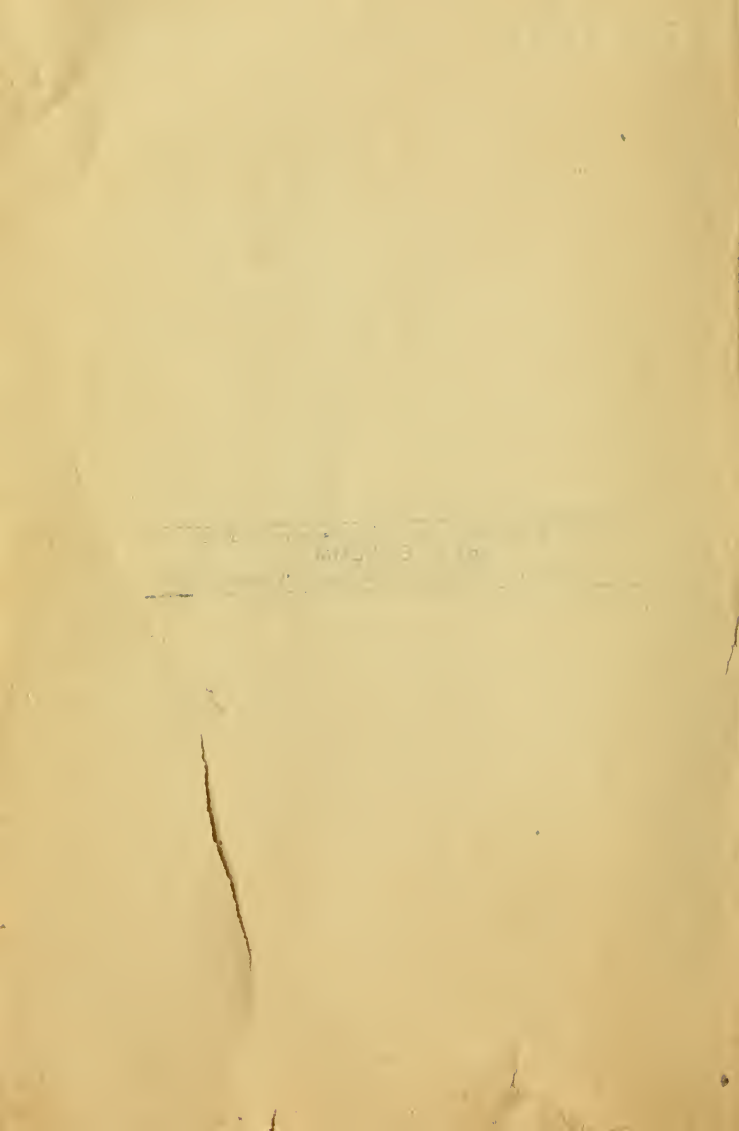
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MR. BIVINS.

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS,

BY F. E. DUMM.

CAST:

HON. B. BIVINS, ESQ.—Editor and Proprietor—Modest (?)

TIMOTHY TIPP—Who rhymes in the name of Bivins—Ironically, very cheeky.

LEWIS JEFFREY—Whose name is not Jeffrey Lewis—The Following Disgrace.

“Uncle” Jo. Johnson—An old timer.

DICKY DICKINS—The “Devil.”

SOCRATES SOCK—A farmer,

WOOLY SOCK—His son.

PARSON—The Shepherd of a woolly flock.

DORA DORCAS—The Cause.

POLLY PAULDING—Of whom Mr. Bivins is very fond.

AUNT AMY—Who is troubled with a Following Disgrace.

ANNA BIVINS—B’s ‘altogether lovely’ sister.

THE MILLER’S DAUGHTER.

Farmers. Cowboys, Milkmaids and Others.

Produced by ...

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A country printing office. The backs of the cases front the audience, surrounding a Franklyn type-smasher. C. a table, upon which is a partly made-up form. L. C. railed off, representing the editor's sanctum. All the natural and ordinary paraphernalia of the backwoods printing office go in to enliven this stage setting. Joseph Johnson on first case. Enter Dicky Dickens, L. C. with broom and dust-pan.

DICKY

THE SONG OF THE "DEVIL."

The printer's "Devil" at break of day
Slips into his clothes and speeds away.
With his keys of brass he opens the doors,
With a worn-out broom he sweeps the floors
And hustles a multitude of chores,
And whistles the song of the "Devil."

What will the Spring Poet say to that?

JO (Looking over his case) He will say like a spring poet or, as a spring poet would say it, as he has often said before—hem—ba! Sonny, have you any chawing tobacco?

DICK He will say, as says a spring poet, or, said a spring poet, as say you—"Sonny, have you any chawing tobacco?" As now say I; indeed, sir; a plug of it, with which, sir, I will plug your says and saids. There! (Hands Jo a plug of exaggerated size and picking up his stick handles it playfully.)

JO What kind o' plug is this?

DICK That? It is a delicate brand and is called the sponge plug.

JO Eh!

DICK It is not called the sponge plug because it is sponged, for that's the usual destruction of all plugs,

but—beware it—filled with water, it swells. Indent it lightly—sponge!

JO Rogue, you!

(Jo makes a feint of striking Dicky with the plug—Dicky dodges, drops the half-filled 'stick' and runs toward L exit.)

JO Blacksmith! Pest you! Rough on rollers! Avast!

(Is on the point of using the plug as a pellet; upon second thought takes a "chaw.")

JO You maker of "hell metal!" You-you type-smasher-you-look out!

(Limps after and hurls plug at Dicky, who rushes toward L exit and against Timothy Tipp who was about to enter. Both are prostrated.)

JO Ha, ha! Now what says the Spring Poet?

DICK (gasping) If-he-hasn't-any more-wind-to-say-it-with-than-I-have he-don't-say-nothing!

(Enter Tipp gasping and holding his sides.)

TIP "Which of you have done this? Devil?"

DICK No, sir. How could I have done it when I am already done for?

TIPP (falling into a chair) Printer, a glass of water!

DICK (falling into a chair) Printer, put two straws in it!

JO I'll set up the obsequies of the one who sees me do it. (lifting Dick from the chair and shaking him) Now, blacksmith, pick up these type! Do you hear?

DICK Yis sir.

JO Don't slip 'em through the ventilator!

DICK You mean this crack in the floor? Yis sir.

JO Eh!

DICK No sir. (aside) Down the crack they go.

(Dick crawls under the case, makes faces at Jo and disposes of the 'pi' in the quickest manner possible.)

JO Did it hurt, Tipp? Where did you feel it most? Egad, sir; how

is it now?

TIP It came like a dream—

JO The devil he did!

TIP And like a dream it passed away.

JO I'm glad you feel better.

TIP Printer, I don't feel better. Did you ever walk from your boarding house—

JO Yes, and carried my baggage.

TIP In summer time—

JO Late at night, sir.

TIP When the little birds were singing overhead, when—

JO I jumped my board bill.

TIP The soft undulating murmur of a babbling brook lulled nature into a quiet repose and, inspiration, like a glorious sun—

JO Rose above the cow shed, I see it now.

TIP No. Filled your mind, your heart, your soul with rhythmical music, beyond the base, the commonplace of *terra firma*.

JO That was next morning; the landlord was furious.

TIP It was any morning. You do not catch the drift.

JO Then I'll drift into it, sir. (turns his back to Tipp) Push me!

TIP Thus floating mid this pleasant scene—

Art forming thoughts and words in line—

A devil comes to steal away—

JO What?

TIP The last line of my poem on Jersey Cattle. (rises) It departed with my breath but it did not return with it.

JO Have you any chawing tobacco?

TIP No, sir; I never chaw. [aside] Man is foolish when he tries to feed honey to old timers.

JO [aside] Eh! Then he must need swallow a pill before each meal. Egad, look at him! I always thought him dyspeptic, he spits up poetry ex-

temporaneously; yea, and often before it's properly digested. Well, Blacksmith!

DICK That's the last of 'em.

JO Get to your case!

DICK Yis sir.

(Tipp takes a position in the Editor's Sanctum—Uncle Jo re-commences work after examining the ventilator—likewise Dickey, who looks over his case, grimaces at Jo and pelts him with type.)

BIVINS (within) Come in, Polly! Eh! Why, come in! I want to show you my latest, on Jersey Cattle Beautiful subject! Beautiful poem! (enter Bivins followed by Polly Paulding) I'm going to send it to China and have it set to music. Did you ever hear a Jersey calf warble? Eh? Course you have. Beats anything; don't it? You ought to hear a Chinnee! Stupendous? Well! You can sign your cross-bones to those yellow sons of rice every day in the week. They've got old Vesuvius to give 'em a lift. (crosses) Hello, Tipp! Tipp, my dear fellow, where is Jersey cattle?

TIP In your pocket, Mr. Bivins.

BIV [fumbling in his pockets] How could I do without you, Tipp.

TIP [aside] I contracted a nervous nightmare composing Jersey Cattle and now he steals the controlling stock of it. Poor, modest Tipp!

POL Can't you find it, Mr. Bivins?

BIV Ah, here it is.

In pastures green and meadows fair,

The Jersey Cattle chew their cud,

And midst the —

brickdust—britches—pantaloons! No!

Excuse me!

birches!

That's it!

over there,

Arise the towers of Me Lud.

That's the h'essence of poetry. Isn't it lifting? Do you know the sentiment reflects your image to old timers?

POL La, do it, sir?

BIV Do it? My dear girl, it do. Nothing like poetry, Polly; nothing! Take it blank or scatter verse, shell-

shot or broadcast, it's poultry just the same. Cultivate it, Polly; cultivate it! Sleep on it, dream on it and wake up in the morning and glue it together!

POL But, sir; I don't know how.

BIV What an equiv-o-cal simplicity! I'll give you lessons. I'm one of the old school, I am. I'm a daisy! I'll give you a pointer. (turns, coughs.)

TIP (aside) He had better take some.

POL It's kind o' you, Mr. Bivins.

BIV Tut, tut, Polly; tut, tut! I shall only be elevating a beautiful art by carving your name upon the heights, a foot-and-a-half below mine!

TIP (aside) Brass added to "whackery!"

BIV You'll have an excellent tutor, excellent! And I don't brag, Polly; not I—but I want it distinctly understood, I have built a stupendous reputation—

DICK (comming forward) Copy! Copy! Copy!

TIP [aside] Upon my gen'us, at six dollars a week.

BIV Mr. Tipp, where is the obsequies I wrote last night for Jones? I think it is in your pocket, Mr. Tipp; in fact, Mr. Tipp, I am pretty sure of it. (turns and coughs)

TIP Yes, Mr. Bivins.

BIV Give it to the "devil." Polly, I never glided so naturally into obsequies as last night. I liked old Jones—he was a good old cuss, and even if he did ship his father to the Poor House and crippled his wife's mother, and too stingy to wear socks—I gave him a wonderful send-off: Silvery banks, golden paraphernalia, Ga-bre-al, with his tuba, locked arms with Peter with his big brass key, and Jones behind the Rider on the Pale Horse, galloping up the broken steps of "Nymbust". But don't tell anybody. I'm modest, I am. I know I can knock the breath out of any parson in America writing obsequies; but

I don't want it known. No getting over it, Polly, I'm too modest; but I'm a daisy on obsequies, ain't I, Mr. Tipp? (turns and coughs.)

TIP Yes, Mr. Bivins. (aside) He never wrote one in his life. Polly, if you had half a wit, you'd see my gen'us struggling through the rise and fall of "Jersey Cattle" and Jones' recommendation for paradise, at six dollars a week.

BIV [after fumbling in his pocket] Polly, you see this letter?

POL Course, sir.

BIV I have a wealthy—extremely wealthy aunt; and aristocratic, too.

POL La, sir.

BIV And a deliciously beautiful and accomplished neice.

POL I want to know!

BIV Who is the daughter of my aunt's sister and my aunt's brother-in-law—both deceased.

POL How sad!

BIV Sad? It's outrageous! You are sure you see this letter?

POL Yes, sir, is it a slight o' hand trick? Now you see it, now you don't?

(All rush forward to see the trick, looking over B's shoulder.)

BIV Oh, no, no! You confounded idiots; back to your kennels! Mr. Tipp, I'm ashamed of you! Now, my dear girl, come as close as you possibly can? The letter is opened.

POL So it is.

BIV It says—if it were not opened, it would say nothing—you grasp?

POL With both hands, sir.

(Dick throws type at Uncle Jo and hits Bivins.)

BIV [crosses] Mr. Tipp, remember I pay you six dollars a week! I am thunderstruck, sir; but I forgive you.

TIP I beg your pardon, Mr. B?

BIV Shut up! Excuse me! Well, this letter says:

DEAR NEPHEW:—Your cousin, Dora, who, as you know, has been polishing her education in a female seminary, has fallen into a

slight disgrace; which, as I take it, is a queer mishap for a female seminary of belles lettres. However, on account of this precipitation, I have for various reasons thought it necessary, with her, to make you and your sister a visit; for the disgrace, like the unusual run of disgraces, is a FOLLOWING DISGRACE. Expect us at any moment.

Your affectionate Aunt,

AMY.

P. S.—How is the Bull Dog?

That's what it says, Polly.

POL It be rather strange, Mr. B.

BIV Strange! Polly, I have a stupendous mind. I can think of twenty things as well as one—sometimes. You have often noticed that; other people have noticed it, too; but on this particular occasion—I pass, I am pushed against the stump; literally, I am N G. What is a following disgrace? It is a disgrace that follows. What's that? Give it up!

POL I feel sorry for the young lady.

BIV And I have several lachrems for the following disgrace.

POL Do you think it's man or woman?

BIV That's an idea! Disgrace that follows a man or woman. Let me see. Woman follows man—no, man follows woman! Co'rse it's a man; because man is a following disgrace, when he follows a feminine—seminary, an actress, a circus, or, what not? That's it; what not? My dear girl, I grasp. All you've got to do with Bivins, is to touch the right spot and watch the truth pop out beautifully. And you're the girl to do it; yes you are, Polly—co'rse you are.

POL You're flattering, sir.

BIV "Why should the poor——"

SOCK (within) Stand around thar, dern ye! Whoa!

BIV (crosses) Excuse me! Here comes my old friend—Um! Hang me if I know his name, and he'll stop the paper if I don't. What's that fellow's

name, Tipp? That 'un that's getting out o' the wagon?

TIP Don't know him, sir.

BIV O lor! Going, Polly? Good moring! Call again, Polly!

POL Good morning! (exit.)

BIV Ta, ta! Delicious Polly! Now, Tipp, get that fellow's name. Make no mistake, Tipp; mind you, no mistake.

TIP All right, sir.

(Bivins goes behind sanctum, and looks over—Socrates Sock enters with his arms full of squash.)

SOCK Is yer editor in?

TIP No, sir; unless, sir—unless I am the editor.

BIV [aside to Tipp] No self-praise necessary, Mr. Tipp.

SOCK Yer the fellow that ploughs up them pottery biznesses, hain't you; thet kind o' makes my gals go topsy-turvy like, an' sich stuff—be an't you?

BIV (to Tipp) Mr. Tipp!

TIP A slight mistake, sir; the editor of the Bull Dog—Hon. B. Bivins, Esq. Do you prefer hexametre or iambic measure?

SOCK Don't know 'em, sir; never heard of 'em, but I suppose I'd take 'em by the bushel, I'm so dern liberal. Do you like squash?

BIV (to Tipp) Swim out, Tipp!

TIP Yes, I am very fond of squash; it's quite a poetical flower, John, Peter, Henry—eh! Um, what the d—l is your name? How's your brother?

SOCK I haven't got any brother.

TIP No?

SOCK And my name hain't John, nuther. Don't you know me? I've lived in this county over forty years—I was here fore the injuns wus. I'm an old settler, I am. Mr. Bivins knows me; he knows me well. 'An you don't know who I am?

TIP I beg your pardon!

SOCK Well, I'll tell you—my name is Socrates Sock—Democrat; School Director of District No. 6, and henflu—

Biv (rushing forward) My old friend, Socrates; how are you, Sock! Glad to see you! How's your daughters? Lovely girls, Sock—lovely! And the old woman—wonderful old Sock she—eh!

Soc Been dead these fifteen years.

Biv Poor old soul; co'rs'e she has. Ah, Sock, it seems but yesterday her gentle spirit made a raise! Come in to pay your subscription! Co'rs'e you did—ha, ha; you can't fool Bivins—not much! Bull Dog's booming, Sock, booming, booming, booming! That's the word! Give us your hand on the next President! (Sock drops the squash.) Never mind, Sock; never mind—there, there, excuse me! (Helps Sock gather up the squash.)

Soc Don't mention it!

Biv You're a wonderful man, Sock—wonderful! You never knew that before; did you? You're too modest, you are. No getting over it, Sock, you're stupendous! Everybody knows that! Got a stupendous family, and lots o' money, too—you old rascal—heaps of it! And so you came in to pay your subscription? I'm glad to see you!

Soc With squash, Mr. Bivins—with squash.

Biv Sock, my most esteemed fellow citizen, look at me? I have my profoundest sympathies mixed up in squash, turnips and cord-wood, but the desire in their direction has been happily attended to.

Soc Then you don't want 'em?

Biv There is an argument in the case, Sock. "Judge not lest ye be judged," but judge further on. I can not pay Mr. Johnson with squash—can I Jo?

Jo [looks over case and spits.] No. I'd rather exist on promises.

Biv Nor the "Devil," with squash—can I Dicky?

Dick I'm willin' to take most any-

thing, but we don't keep cows.

Biv Smart boy, Sock—deucedly smart! Nor Mr. Tipp, with squash—can I, Mr. Tipp?

Tip No, sir!

Biv But it being you, Sock—my dear old Socrates; whom I have known for so many years; pile your squash on that table yonder. (crosses) My dear Tipp, that's the 21st, and I hope, sir, the last farmer who will be in this week to feed the Bull Dog squash. He can't stand it much longer, Tipp—he'll get squamish—he'll be belching—mark it!

Soc You'll find these good squash, my boy, Wooly grew 'em.

Biv [aside] D—m his boy, Wooly! [to Sock] I flatter myself, Mr. Sock; I flatter myself!

(Sock piles the squash upon a partly made up form "piing" it—type rattle upon the floor.)

Dick (to Sock) Dog gone you, 'git out! (coming forward) O lor'!

Jo (coming forward) Blacksmith, what now!

Biv (crosses) Shut up—shut—Hello!

Dick O lor', O lor'; he dropped the squash upon the form and the form is squashed!

Jo The Devil take him! Hare 'em manufacture themselves into 'pi!

(All rush back to table.)

Soc I reckon I've struck a stump, Mr. Bivins.

Biv Reckon? Well, I should say you have. (looks over the form) Git out!

Soc You can mend it in no time.

Biv Mend thunder, sew lightning together, cut a pigeon-wing on a rainbow! Git out, you holy Sock, you woolly Sock; unwashed, unbleached, uncarded Sock—you—git out! I'll run you through the Courts, sir! I'll glut over you in the Common Pleas, I'll sit on you in the District, and I'll

squash you in the Supreme—you long-legged Sock—you Balmoral, you! Git out, git out, git out; I'll put you out! Bivins throws off his coat, and taking Sock by the shoulders, pushes him toward L. exit—Mr. Tipp lends his assistance.)

Soc Mr. Bivins, I'll have my boy, Wooly, at ye; I'll have my boy, Wooly, at ye!

Biv D—m your boy, Wooly, and your squash, too! You cross-grained sea-weed! You! Git out! [throws him out, and the squash after him.] There, there, there; you rogue of ho-siery!

Soc (outside) I'll git my boy Wooly at ye; dern me! Wooly! Wooly! Wooly!

Biv [crosses] We'll never get out this week, Tipp; never! The Whip-orwill's going to throw us in the shade, and all for a-a-a—damme. Mr. Tipp—damme, sir; a squash!

Dick What shall we do, sir?

Biv Work, boy, work! Improve time; invent time—stop the sun, stop the moon, stop the press, stop everything; and work, work, work! Jump into that 'pi' and hustle, boy!

Dick Yis, sir. [goes back]

(Enter Lewis Jeffrey.)

Jef Could I see the editor?

Biv Who are you? You're his boy. Wooly, ain't you? (grabs him by the collar) You come around to lick the editor, you young, half-cotton, seamless, bow-legged Sock, you! You did, didn't you? Ha, ha!

Jef My dear sir, you have made a mistake.

Biv Pardon me; I believe it, sir. Who are you?

Jef My name is Lewis, my trade, printer; my wants, employment.

Biv Holy John Henry, come to my arms. (embrace) You're a printer, you are? You want work—must have it, sir; would starve if you didn't get it! Eh? Come to my arms! [em-

brace] Pull off your coat, your vest, your pants! No, no; I'm all—excuse me—excited, sir! You see, sir; but, pshaw, you don't see it. Come here, I'll show it to you. Come here, come here, come here! [drags him back to the "pi." Look at it, sir; look at it! JEF Quite a wreck, sir.

Biv Look at it. There is one of the spiciest, derndest Democratic forms that was ever set down upon. Don't ask how, when or where, but dive into it. (coming forward) Tipp, I'm going to buy a bull dog to ventilate the pantalets of the next farmer who comes in here with squash.

TIP Our wants demand a dozen.

Biv [picking up paper] I'll write out an 'ad' for a gross.

TIP Please don't use that paper?

Biv Why not? I want bull dogs opposed to squash. (writes)

TIP That's the first act of my Five Act Drama.

Biv Eh?

TIP My Five Act Drama.

Biv What do you call it?

TIP It's French, sir, and it is called BILLY, THE BOY SPIDER, or THE VAMPIRES OF PARIS.

Biv Billy, the Boy Spider; that's very good. Is it emotional, tragedy, comedy or pastoral?

TIP It is a little mixed, Mr. B. The leading lady gets sick.

Jo (looking over his case) So will the audience.

Biv And dies, Mr. Tipp?

TIP Oh, no; she feels better after a while.

Jo (same play) But the audience never recovers.

Biv If you want to make Billy, the Boy Spider a success, I would advise you to kill the leading lady in the last act. I'll let you read it to me, Tipp. It's conferring a favor, I know; but no one shall ever say that Mr. Bivins was stingy. We are going to have a pic-

nic, Monday, if my Aunt Amy comes. We'll steal a march on 'em, and I'll give you a few pointers. What's the leading lady's name?

TIP Dora.

JEF (aside) Dora!

BIV Delightful Dora! That's good, Mr. Tipp; very good! I'll be a great man some day if you only continue in our glorious art.

TIP (aside) At six dollars a week!

(Coach horn outside and coach.)

BIV (crossing to L.) Here comes the coach!

TIP And its stopping in front of the office! (crosses to L.)

COACHMAN (outside) Whoa, thar! Dern you! W-h-o-a!

BIV There's my Aunt Amy!

JEF (who has come forward.) And my dear Dora!

BIV [to JEF.] How's that, printer?

JEF (showing copy) What is this word, sir?

BIV Don't know—ask Tipp? There's little Dorcas! Isn't she delicious! I'm coming, Aunt Amy—I'm coming! (exit.)

JEF Dora, Dora, my scheme is working, working, working!

TIP How, sir?

JEF What is this word? Scheme?

TIP Confusion! No! Jersey Cattle don't give schemes. Cream!

JEF Thanks. [goes back to case, Tipp crosses to sanctum.]

COACHMAN (outside) Gee long! Huzzah! Git—dern ye!

BIV (outside) My dear aunt; Glad to see you! You're looking like a cowslip! How's everybody?

AMY (outside) Well, Billy.

BIV (outside) And dear me, my little cousin, Dora! Talk about hollyhocks an' rose buds; you're positively delicious!

DORA (outside) So you're my cousin?

BIV (outside) Co'rsé I am; and,

dern me, if I hain't proud of yo
Come in!

(Enter Bivins, followed by Aunt Amy and Dora.)

BIV You're welcome to the class—
—you're welcome, co'rsé you are! And we're going to make it pleasant for you, you better guess! We'll have picnics, picnics and picnics, and—

(Dora winks at Jeffrey.)

BIV Dora, my dear cousin, don't wink at the printers; it haint allowable! He's a new one, little Dorcas; but he's providential—ah, but he is!

DORA He's perfectly horrid, and it's perfectly horrid to say I wink at him!

BIV He's outrageous, Dora, and so am I.

AMY [R] Billy, what a cosy office you have.

BIV Billy! What simplicity! I flatter myself, aunt; I flatter myself.

AMY And what a nice young gentleman in the second box!

DORA Nice, Aunt Amy; how do you say so?

AMY Sissy, don't talk back to your relatives! Billy, who is he?

BIV (aside) Dern me if the coach lady hain't wrecked, too! (to Amy) You see, aunt, he's—he's providential! You're welcome, Aunt! Come, we go to the house! Anna's awaiting your coming with outstretched arms! (to Dora) Anna's, my sister, and she's a daisy; hain't she, Mr. Tipp?

TIP Yes, Mr. Bivins.

BIV Co'rsé she is! Come to the way. (crosses L.)

Dora nods to Jeffrey.

WOOLY [outside] Where's the man that hit my dad! Whar's the cad that schizzers it yar! Show 'em to me!

BIV That's his boy, Wooly!

Bivins takes off his coat and vest.

WOOL (entering—to Tipp) Are ye the Editor? Are ye the man that

lammed my poor old dad? Are ye?

Wooly grabs papers, books, ink-stand, etc., and showers them over Tipp's head—B. gets behind Wooly—takes off his collar and ties his suspenders about his waist.

Biv I'll show him who the editor is! The idea of taking Tipp for the editor! Excuse me, ladies!

All come forward. Bivins takes Wooly by the shoulders, throws him down, places his foot upon him and strikes a gladiatorial attitude—Jeffrey hurriedly embraces Dora—

Tipp emmerges from the "shower"—Aunt Amy, Uncle Jo. and Dicky come to the rescue with their lungs.

Biv Pardon me! I hope I find you cool! This is the way the Bull Dog barks—excuse me!

CUBTAIN.

THE PICNIC.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Wood scene—river at back with bank of sufficient height to conceal a person—Settees and rustic benches (R) and (L.) Enter Uncle Jo and Dicky with fish-poles and bait can.

Jo (R) Huzzah! You young rascal, come here! (Enter Dick) Look here, young 'un, this is the last time you go fishing with me. (going back) Come, come, now, we will throw in here and await developments.

DICK And the picnics, Uncle Jo.
Jo Never mind, boy, we hain't tied! Anyway, there's more river where this comes from.

Dicky throws in.

DICK Here goes for—

(sings)

A a fish without a tail,
A ship with out a sail,
A sturgeon in a gale,
A minnow for a whale!

Tra, la, la, a whale; tra, la, la, a whale!
Tra, la, la: tra, la, la; tra, la, la, a whale!

Fishy, fishy, from thy nock,
At the bottom of the brook,
With a sideway, hungry look—
Nab the sweetmeat of my hook?

Pull it under,
Take it yonder,
Make no blunder,
Go to thunder!

And I'll land you here, my finny fish!

Jo (threatening with his pole) Stop your noise, boy! I won't have it! The occasion requires quiet; and quiet we should have, must have and

shall have, boy.

DICK So say I, Uncle Jo and so says—

(Sings.)

A fish without a tail.

* * * * *

Jo Pest, you; I've a notion to throw you in! We'll never get a bite—narry a nibble! Sonny, did you spit on your bait?

DICK No, sir; I chaws tobacco, 'an I've respect for the feelings of the fish

Jo Young'un, you're a blacksmith! Do you think—or, don't you, if you do—that a fish doesn't know his man by the flavor of the bait—then spit! (spits) The bait alone is, perhaps, as good; but fish, in some respect, have fallen into the habits of our best society—they will not recognize a man in nature's coat—therefore, spit! (same play) You can not clad your bait in in a Prince Albert nor a roundabout; for, behold, the bait like the man is not seen—spit again! (same play) Or, if you should have conveniently a bottle of "Rose Water—" (produces bottle)

DICK That's brandy, Uncle Jo!

Jo Take out the cork—thus; hold it—thus; tip it—thus; and then—spit!

DICK Don't drink it, Uncle Jo?

Jo What's the matter, sonny?

DICK Did you ever read that little poem which wonders:

How many who now are beloved and great,

How many who now at the head of the State,

How many whose thoughts have enlightened the race,

Whose songs have been sung in a God-given place;

How many whose anthem in present and past

Has been but the dirge of a worthless outcast,

Have whistled the song of the "Devil?"

And why is it that some are looked up too, and some hain't, Uncle Jo? It's "rose water" you take—thus; hold—thus; tip—thus; it's the bane of the

printer!

JO Sonny, who told you that?

DICK My mother, Uncle Jo.

JO You're a rascal, boy; and your mother—well, she's pretty near an angel! Hold my pole? I'll hurl this fire to its native place. I'll never drink again! (goes behind a tree and takes a drink.) Never, never! (comes back) Sonny, you take your mother's advice. There's more common sense in it for you than you'll find in an encyclopaedia; heap more, Sonny.

DICK And for you, Uncle Jo.

JO No, boy; I'm too old! I'm old enough to be your mother—I mean, I'm an old rascal! Hist, there! I've a nibble!

Enter Lewis Jeffrey and Dora right.

DORA There will be no difficulties? Everything is prepared—are you sure?

JEF Everything, dear; even the—(shows her the marriage license.) Are you afraid of it; are you frightened?

DORA Was never braver in my life—and, to-morrow, Lewis!

JEF Not to-morrow, Little Dorcas—this afternoon.

DORA It seems the time will never come!

JEF (embraces her) It's only a few hours hence.

JO [aside] That's further than I am. Fish won't bite under the present circumstances! Ahem!

JEF So, so, my Jo Johnson, my Jo John! Come here, sir?

JO Can't, got a bite.

JEF (going back) You saw—saw—JO No, sir; I felt it.

JEF The bite? Certainly. Miss Dorcas, my esteemed and worthy friend, Mr. Joseph Johnson.

DORA My dear sir, this is an unexpected pleasure.

JO The same to you, Miss.

JEF Johnson, you will do me a favor?

JO Oh, sir; but the fish has stop-

ed biting. He has the bait.

JEF Will you meet me in Pleasant Hollow at 5 o'clock, this afternoon?

JO That's a mile and a half on the other side of Pleasant Chapel? I have a nibble, sir; but it pulls hardly strong enough to hook it. I will, sir!

JEF Thanks! A close mouth is suggestive of a great mind; you have had a dream—forget it!

JO A nightmare, sir; the nibble is becoming substantial.

JEF You'll accompany him, Dick? As they say it at the theatre, "I will requite thy loves."

DICK All right, sir. Here come the picnickers!

Uncle Jo and Dicky get under the bank.

JEF [with Dora coming forward] Remember the play!

BIV [within] Here's an excellent place to stop! Nature's hand's here—Oh, Nature, beautiful Nature! Isn't that a poetic idea? No snakes here. Aunt; no snakes here! Take Bivins' word for it, he can smell a snake as soon as he sees it. Quiet here and shade, too!

Enter Bivins, carrying a very small basket, followed by Aunt Amy, Tipp—loaded with every conceivable kind of basket—Polly B. and Anna B.

TIP Here's where the ferries dance at mid-night, with hats of but-tercups, and wands so light and airy—

BIV Mr. Tipp, allow me! (hands him his basket.)

TIP With pleasure, Mr. Bivins!

BIV And here they pose upon the cowslip, Aunt, and with horn and pipe of dandelion, awake the King Bull-frog reposing in the brook, and—

TIP Troops of little forms circle o'er their heels with lyre and harp, communing sweetest harmony to the sleeping nature hereabouts, and—

BIV Mr. Tipp, drop it! I mean the baskets. [to Dora R. C.] My dear coz, you gave us the slip—yes you did! Where's the cause; in-

roduce him to me! Tut, tut, don't blush! You rogue, you! [to Jeffrey]

DORA (L. C.) Come here, coz!

BIV (aside) Coz! She likes me! Well, dear; what is it?

DORA I have been terribly bored!

BIV Now have you, coz!

DORA And I have been very lonesome, too; without you, Mr. Bivins.

BIV I was sure of it. (aside) I'm positively irresistible! Tell me, dearie, who has disturbed the hilarity of the occasion? Call me coz.

DORA Not exactly that, Mr. Bivins—I mean, coz—merely an annoyance, you know—that's all. Say, coz; I suspicion him. (points at Tipp.)

BIV Is that so!

DORA Yes, I suspicion him.

BIV So you said.

DORA Hist! Watch him!

POLE (Coming forward) I hope I do not interrupt you! (sarcastically) Miss Dorcas I want to show you a pretty picture along the opposite bank of the river. You'll excuse her, Mr. B?

Dora bows and is led back by Polly.

BIV Certainly! (aside) There's another girl who likes me, 'an she's delicious, too.

JEF (coming forward) Mr. Bivins, you do not seem to be enjoying yourself? It's not to be wondered at, considering the possibility—

BIV (confidential) Say, do you suspicion anybody?

JEF Mr. Tipp, sir.

BIV Ha, ha!

JEF (mysteriously) Hist! Watch him! (returns to B. C.)

BIV Something's wrong; something's wrong, and Bivins' the man to get at the bottom of it.

Bivins goes back, and leads Tipp to L. F.

BIV (mysteriously) Hist!

TIP (same play) Hist!

BIV (C) That won't do' sir! Mr. Tipp, look at me! Don't you squint, nor gaze aslant! Bah, sir; I see

through you!

TIP [astonished] You don't say!

BIV Pshaw, Mr. Tipp; you can't crawl out of this like a crawfish! I suspicion you!

TIP [frightened] Is that so!

Bivins leads Tipp within range of Jo's line.

BIV Hist!

TIP Hist!

BIV It's going to bust!

TIP Eh!

Jo throws a fish upon Bivins.

BIV O lor'! It's busted!

TIP Boom! Huzzah!

All come forward.

JO [coming forward] That's my fish! Look out, you'll step on it!

BIV (angrily) Johnson, where did you come from, where have you been and what are you doing?

TIP Yes, printer; what are you doing?

BIV Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins.

BIV Shut up!

JO [holding up the fish] Mr. Bivins, isn't he a beauty?

BIV Isn't my sleeve a beauty? There's blood on it, 'an scales, too! I wouldn't have had this happen for fifty dollars! I'm astonished at you, Johnson, I ain, indeed—positively astonished—but I forgive you, sir.

TIP Ditto, printer.

JO Bah!

BIV It would be quite a relief, Mr. Johnson; but never mind, stay where you are—we can move Mr. Johnson, we can move!

TIP Yes, printer, we can move.

BIV Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins.

BIV Shut up!

JO Thank you both. I hope you won't find me ungrateful.

Jo recontinues fishing—All go back to L. B. —Tipp with Anna; Bivins with Aunt Amy.

BIV My dear Aunt, you look positively, perfectly and completely done

for.

AMY And so, I am, Billy. Would you favor me with a glass of water?

BIV Certainly, my dear Aunt; I would do anything to favor you. Mr. Tipp, friend in joy and sorrow, will you please. Mr. Tipp, take this small bucket (hands him an exaggerated bucket) and go to the farm house, mile an' a half on the t'other side of yonder hill, and ask the farmer, Mr. Tipp, for a few drops of his best nectar? Tell him you know Bivins, an' he'll embrace you. Look out for dogs, Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins!

BIV Mr. Tipp!

TIP With pleasure, sir. [crosses to U. L.] I'll never go to another picnic with Bivins; dern me! (exit)

AMY Now, Billy, come and amuse me until the arrival of the nectar? You are so entertaining.

Bivins seats himself beside her.

BIV I flatter myself, Aunt; I flatter myself! I'll tell you about the furor I raised in Cordwood township, last campaign. Made a stupendous hit, Aunt; stupendous! (Jef leads Polly to R. F.) All wood-choppers in Cordwood, and when the Hon. B. B. arose to address them, they threw their sweaty night-caps in the air—la, Aunt, everything has its damp application.

AMY Indeed, indeed; it has Billy.

BIV One little chopper hit me in the eye with a soft tomato; it almost extinguished the light of the meeting!

AMY That was too bad, Billy.

BIV It was outrageous! But I hurled my venom at him, Aunt; I hurled my venom!

JEF Miss Paulding, I hope you will not be offended, but I have been some what amused, or rather astonished by incidents not altogether proper. You are not aware that Mr. Bivins—

POL Well, sir; what of Mr. Bivins?

JEF I suspicion him! I am led to

believe you are his friend and, therefore, I advise you, for his sake and your own, not at any time to allow him out of your sight.

POL You think his cousin—Pah! Pshaw; it's no matter of mine!

JEF "Actions speak louder than words," Miss Paulding. Watch him!

POL I will, sir; and—thank you, sir! [Jef. to L. B.] Billy Bivins, you-you-you talk to me again of moonshine and duck-ponds and turn-stiles and garden-gates, and—I'll—I'll box your ears, sir! (retires to L. B.)

BIV Anna, dear, will you favor us with a song? The one you sang last night will do. It was rather lifting, dear—rather!

ANN Oh, William!

BIV Is my sister a giggler? Must she be teased, entreated—like the doll of fashion, the young graduate, the amateur? Pah, my altogether lovely; let us have a song?

ANN A dozen, William!

BIV [aside] She always calls me William when she don't like me.

SPECIALTIES.

ANN Now, William, we will hear from you! The song you sang last night will do. It was rather lifting—rather!

BIV Excuse me, my dear sister; there's a good girl!

ANN Is my brother a giggler? Must he be teased, entreated—like the snob of fashion, the young graduate, the amateur? Pah, my altogether lovely William; let us have a song!

BIV (aside) That's my altogether lovely sister! Very well, dear; very well! I have an orchestra in the wagon; excuse me, while I trot it in.

ALL With pleasure!

Exit Mr. Bivins.

JEF (to Anna, R. F.) Miss Anna, I have noticed some queer things to-day, regarding your brother!

ANN Why, sir; what do you mean?

JEF Keep an eye on him!

ANN Indeed, sir; you refer to—

JEF Should he attempt to elude you; follow him! He means mischief—

ANN To Mr. Tipp? I suspected it, sir! He treats Tipp abominably!

JEF Hist; here he comes! (to B.L.)

Enter Bivins with instrument.

BIV (F. C.) Here's an instrument which has passed through a dozen generations of our family history. All the Bivins were musicians, except Josiah, who was swung into eternity at Newgate. My grandfather was a master, he could stand on his head against a barn door, and manipulate this affair in the tune of "Old Zeb Coon," with the ease and grace of a Cleopatra. It would have done your souls good to have heard my grandfather glide into sharps and flats. He would trebble up to 'em twelve flights above the staff, radiate for a few moments in that ethereal region, and, having kicked up dust sufficient—all on a sudden, and just when you wsn't expecting it, come down ke-smash—striking every line on the staff, bounding and re-bounding upon every octave—falling plump, plump, plump, plump, plump, plump; upon the last line, immediately sinking 40 degrees below zero! I'll sing you one of my grandfather's songs.

(Sings.)

THE EDITOR.

I am a jolly editor—

A pusher of the quill—

My path through life is heavenly;

Excepting when it's ill.

My work is done profoundly—

Of Franklyn I'm a chip—

Composing all my articles;
Except the ones I clip.

Chorus.

When I go by

They say, O my!

And smile most pleasantly;

Turn on their toes

And pinch their nose,

And yell: "Say, who is he?"

Meaning the editor; the jolly young editor—

The spit-fire editor of the barking Bull Dog.

And when the neighbors silently

Throw up the sponge and die,

I obsequise them truthfully;

Excepting when I lie.

I write up scandals mournfully

Of female, man and kid,

And splurge at all the gatherings;

To which I get a bid.

I dabble oft' in politics,

And dabble oft' in vain—

Bribes find me always indisposed;

Except in case of gain.

I'm not a host financially,

With properties to rent,

And yet I'm seldom busted;

Save when I've not a cent.

All applaud.

ALL Bravo! &c.

OTHER SPECIALTIES.

Enter Tipp—very woe-begone.

ALL Here comes Tipp!

AMY You look quite done for, Mr. Tipp!

TIP And am, Madam! I was persecuted by a dog!

ALL A real dog, Mr. Tipp?

TIP The subject is not poetical; let us drop it! Can I honor myself! Presents Aunt Amy with a glass of water.

BIV Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins!

BIV If there's any honor in it; it belongs to me! (Tipp hands him the glass) I pay him \$6 a week, and he's always working for himself,—(aside)

JEF (To Anna) Do you note that?

BIV With wishes of long life, my—

Jo hits Bivins with a fish—B. drops the glass—ladies scream—Jo comes forward.

BIV Damme, sir; its Johnson! Git out! Ladies and Gentlemen: We will not linger here longer. The wagon waits without! Come; let us to dinner! What slights have found us here, let them be forgotten—and as for you, Joseph Johnson, I will see you later! Here, Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins!

Jo goes back and prepares his line for departure.

BIV [loading Tipp with baskets.] And this, Tipp; yes, and this! Come, friends; the ghostly hour arrives when we consult the inner man! After you, Mr. Tipp!

Exit L. R.—Tipp, Anna, Bivins, Dora.

JEF (to Aunt Amy.) Did you hear him speak?

AMY Who?

JEF If it does not offend you—Please, madam; Mr. Bivins!

AMY Sir!

JEF If you have his welfare at heart, let him not escape your vigilance!

AMY I don't understand.

JEF I'll explain as we go along.

Exit L. R.—Aunt Amy and Jeffrey.

Jo Sonny, we'll get out o' this. When you recognize a hint; one that's broadcast—don't take it. But when it is a lifting hint—bounding and rebounding, as it were, from a No. 12, best cowhide—figuratively speaking—take up thy bed and dust! Go on!

[Jo goes behind tree and takes a drink] Boy, come here. Never forget what your mother told you about "rose-water."

DICK No, indeed, sir! (to U.P.)

Jo Hold on! And never forget, sonny; I am an old rascal who "Loved not wisely but too well"—Billy Shakespear! Go on! (exit U. L. singing—"A fish without a tail," &c.)

Enter Bivins followed by Tipp.

BIV Neatly done, Mr. Tipp; neatly done! Show Bivins the way and he'll not lead you amiss. I'm a schemer, Mr. Tipp—I am; you have noticed that! Other people have noticed it, also. Sit down! [seated U. L.] Now, Mr. Tipp, for the emotional!

TIP In five acts, Mr. Bivins!

BIV Make it brief, Tipp; as brief as possible.

TIP (undoing MSS, reads:)

BILLY, THE BOY SPIDER,

Or THE VAMPIRES OF PARIS.

A Drama in Five acts,

By

BIV Hon. B. Bivins, Esq.

TIP Yes, Mr. Bivins. (reads)

Billy, the Spider, with a wrat upon his back; who never had a mother, and cannot climb a tree.

BIV He could crawl, Mr. Tipp?

TIP As a spider, Mr. Bivins! [reads] 25 Vampires 25—in tights—envious of the wart on Billy's back—Melancholy young men—

BIV Do they know their own mother, Mr. Tipp?

TIP And their mother-in-law!

BIV Happy Vampires!

TIP And can climb a tree—

BIV And the villian, Mr. Tipp, with his basso profundo, his evil eye, his needles and his darts, his die-away voice, his cringing air, his—ha, ha, Mr. Mr. Tipp; the villian?

TIP (reads) Dora, the slave of the Spider.

BIV Tut, tut, sir; Dora Dorcas a

villian? Sweet little Dorcas! No, no, no, Tipp; No!

TIP But it isn't Dorcas, Mr. B!

BIV We will say Dorcas for short—for short, Mr. Tipp. Look me in the face; blank, sir, in the face! A woman a villian! Mr. Tipp, don't imagine for a moment I shall attach my cross-bones to a drama, emotional or otherwise—in five acts—in which the leading lady is the villian!

TIP Mr. Bivins, don't you think—

BIV Not I, Mr. Tipp! Give her a pair of pants and a beard; hurl her from her fair estate to a tipling, bleared-eyed, deep-dyed scallawag; with scars and warts, with boils and carbuncles, and with what not, Mr. Tipp, with what not!

TIP You do not grasp, Mr. Bivins.

BIV (rising) Hit me, sir; on the shoulder, in the eye; pull my hair, call me a liar, spit in my face, sir, and give me a platform, an' I'll grasp by a large majority! The idea of Bivins not grasping! Pah!

TIP I beg a thousand pardons!

BIV [seated] You have em! Go on!

TIP (reads) Billy falls in love with Dora; Billy is a thief!

BIV (rises) Mr. Tipp, Billy is no thief! He may appear as such, as such he may be accused, but Billy is no thief—Billy is stupendous!

TIP But this Billy is a thief!

BIV Remember, Mr. Tipp, my name is Billy!

TIP Yes, sir!

BIV (seated) I forgive you!

TIP (reading) Once upon a time, so the story goes, like a spider crawling between floor and ceiling, Billy wabbles into the midst of a great campmeeting. (Note. The orchestra at this particular point are requested to toot slowly.) Billy pauses—Billy yells—Billy rushes forward—Billy seizes Dora by the hair!

BIV What if the leading lady wear a wig, Mr. Tipp?

TIP I have thought of that, Mr. B; in such a case the leading lady shall not be seized by the hair. (Reads.) Billy flies over the heads of the multitude. Dora is held in his Spider embrace. They corgeal in a deserted alley,

BIV Congeal! I like that.

TIP (reads) There stands his faithful mule, Alazadango, who lost his tail in a skirmish with the Cabs. He looks intelligently at the stump as if he can remember the time when he could knock silly a buzz-fly off his ear.—

BIV Billy does?

TIP (examining MSS.) No, Alazadango.

BIV Poor old Alazadam!

TIP [reads] Billy has no time to lose; Alazadango jumps upon his back; he belabors his sides—

BIV Alazadam does?

TIP (same play) No, Billy.

BIV Poor old Alazadam!

TIP (reads) The multitude fly after them! Billy kicks out right and left; the fore-runners of the multitude with a flourish of trumpets bite the dust! They reach the high cliffs of Santiago by moonlight! Alazadango shrieks *Sic Semper Tyrannus*—

BIV Alazadam does?

TIP (same play) No; Billy.

BIV Poor old Alazadam!

TIP (reads) The sun sets. All is quiet; only the silent breath of Alazadango is heard mocking the quiet motions of nature. Forty years after, when—

BIV Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins.

BIV That's bladerish! It won't do; forty years after is ridiculous. That's something like a monstrosity, and in the legitimate avoid monstrosities. So far the emotional looks plausible, very, my dear boy; but forty years after—Jerusalem, John Rogers, be reasonable!

TIP But, Mr. Bivins, the next 30 scenes is in the United States. Billy is discovered running for Congress; the Vampires, in tights, second ward politicians; Dora is—

BIV Hold on, sir! Now do you think, Mr. Tipp, it takes a Heathen Chineese, or a "Pollock" or a what not forty years to emmigrate to the United States, become naturalized and run for Congress? I am surprised at you; I am, indeed. They do it now in six months; they do it by electricity! "Hold the mirror up to nature," Mr. Tipp, "hold the mirror up to nature!" Is Billy elected?

TIP Therein is the tragedy. Billy can not get a single county solid, while Dora lives to elucidate the campaigning racket, and Alazadango huffs his reputation from a Santiago standpoint, by moonlight. I have heard the clock strike twelve pondering over this great disaster.

Enter Polly, Anna and Aunt Amy L L.

BIV What disaster, Mr. Tipp?

TIP [consults MSS] Dora will not marry Alazadango.

BIV I wouldn't marry a jackass, either. (aside)

TIP If Dora would only die, Mr. Bivins. I haven't got the heart to kill her.

Aunt Amy, Polly and Amy get behind them.

BIV Tipp, don't be chicken hearted! Who will say when I am gone Billy Bivins was a coward? Dorcas is dead!

AMY [to Polly] How's that?

TIP But, Mr. Bivins!

BIV There's no but about it; its rope, knife, bludgeon, fire-brand! It's done, Tipp; so we may as well speak of it in the past. This is the way the Spider did it; we'll say I'm the spider. (rises) I met Dora yonder in the glen. She was sitting under the sycamore on the other side of the fence. I dropped from the lower

branches of the tree; I stood before her; she shrieked; I smiled—mark the effect combined with a Dutch orchestra! "Madam," said I, "Why do you fritter thus your time away mid buzz of bee and sigh of waterfall?"

TIP Did you; what did she say?

BIV She simpered, "Give us a rest!" (Tipp looks disgusted) I sizzed up like a seiltitz powder, and roared like a boiler shop, "Madam, do you take me for a mediaeval nondescript of *monstrosus* development!"

TIP (applauds) Bravo! What did she say?

BIV She lisped affirmatively, "Over the reservoir," in French. Then I foamed, "Ho, ho; Dora Dorcas toward what end will "your unbridled audacity hurl itself" out of the horn! When will it, where will it, out with it!

TIP [applauds] Capital! What did she say?

BIV She gulped from behind her spring bonnet, "When the Robbins Nest Again." Upon the instant I took her by the throat, and drew from my pants' pocket a long ornamental cheese-knife, and severed the head with one terrific sweep; the blood—the blood; ha, ha—the blood—

Aunt Amy falls into Polly's arms—Tipp whistles and applauds.

TIP Eureka! What did she say?

AMY Murder! Help.

BIV (taking Tipp by the collar) We are persued! Come, Tipp; come! Now for Alazadam! [exit U R dragging Tipp after him.]

AMY (all come forward) Follow them, my dears; follow them!

POL They'll murder us if we do.

ANN Heaven help us!

AMY Go this way, that way, everyway; rouse the neighborhood! They'll murder everyone of us.

ANN Don't say it; don't think it!

Billy! Billy! [exit L L]

AMY Dora! Dora! [exit U R]

POL Murder! Murder! [exit U L]

Enter Jeffrey and Dora L L.

JEF Hurry, Dora dear; now's our time or never. It's but a step to the parsonage! [They hurry across the stage and exit.]

Enter Bivins, U R, dragging Tipp after him.

BIV Mr. Tipp, Mr. Tipp. will you please, sir, explain, sir; the cause of this pandemonium, sir? I have reasons to suspicion you, Mr. Tipp. Look me in the face, sir; look me in the face!

TIP If there's a sparrow, Mr. B.—

BIV D—n the sparrow, Mr. Tipp; d—n the sparrow!

TIP I don't understand!

Cries of 'Billy!' 'Murder!' 'Dora!' 'Help!' outside, which Bivins answers in the following:

BIV Do you hear? Hello! Hello! Ho! I was told to watch you, sir—Hello! So I have, and if you refuse to belch—Hello! I'll shake it out of you! Ho! (shakes Tipp violently)

TIP Hold off, sir!

Enter Annt Amy U R.

BIV My dear Aunt—

AMY Don't touch me! Murderer! Villian! Where is Dora—misguided Dora!

BIV Tipp, don't touch me! Murderous, villianous Tipp. Where is Dora?

TIP Oh heaven!

AMY Ir heaven! (crosses) Help! Murder! You have killed her; there is blood on your hands!

BIV There is blood upon my sleeve, but no blood on my hands. Tipp, let me see your hands? No blood. Poor old soul; poor old soul! (taps his head knowingly.) I will see you home, Aunt! Watch her, Tipp; she may get ugly. (aside—they approach her.)

AMY I die, villians; I die!

Aunt Amy falls into Tipp's arms, uttering a respectable scream, Tipp allows her to fall upon the stage—Bivins kneels beside her, U

L.—crossing to U R to admonish Tipp before the entrance of his sister.

BIV Villian, support her! My dear Aunt, what's the matter? Open your jaw, Aunt; open your jaw—speak to me! Eh! You won't! Well, you can do just as you please about it. What did you say? Nothing? Mr. Tipp, was it stump water you brought in the bucket? Eh!

Enter Anna B., L L.

ANN Murder! Murder!

Runs forward and falls over Aunt Amy—during the following several speeches Tipp and Bivins run wildly about the stage.

BIV Another one! Jerusalem, John Rogers; everybody's going crazy! Water, water, water!

TIP Fire! Fire! Fire!

BIV Shut up!

Enter Polly Paulding U L.

POL Blood—blood—blood!

BIV What in the d—I do you want blood for? Water, water, water!

POL ("hors de combat") I'm not afraid of you, sir; nor you! I have said my prayers—I am ready!

BIV Poor girl, she's got 'em, too. My dear, compose yourself; I am only Billy Bivins, editor and proprietor—common, ordinary, every-day Billy Bivins. [he advances, she retreats.] I will not hit you.

Aunt Amy groans.

BIV Mr. Tipp attend to the morgue.

Tipp kneels beside, and fans the morgue with his coat-tails.

BIV I will not pull your hair, nor bite you. Thou knowest my love for thee; therefore compose thyself.

POL Go way! Compose myself, shall I; with the ax above my head; with an ornamental cheese-knife swimming before my eyes? Villian! Murderer! Blood!

BIV Yes, Polly, I am a blood; but

no murderer or villian.

Aunt Amy groans.

Biv Tipp, give your undivided attention to the morgue. Silence lends enchantment to this job.

Polly screams—Bivins follows her about the stage.

Biv Dear Polly, sweet, altogether lovely Polly; explain yourself? [takes her hand.]

Pol Don't touch me! Take your hand away; there's blood upon it!

Biv (Releases her hand) Poor girl, so far gone.

Aunt Amy groans.

Biv Another groan? Attend more closely to the morgue, Tipp.

Pol Where is Dora?

Biv In heaven, for all I know, no sense being jealous of her any longer, Polly.

Pol No, poor girl; but you'll hang, murderer!

Biv Poor Poll! Poor Poll! (aside) Nothing like humoring lunatics. Yes, sweet Poll, altogether lovely Poll, I will hang by a large majority.

Pol Why did you kill her, sir; she was always good to you—so kind, so docile—the sweetest girl I ever met?

Biv How sad! This is a pure case of stump water.

Pol She's dead, she's dead; dead as a stone—dead as a stone!

Biv You don't mean it!

Pol Murdered!

Biv You're not out of your senses!

Pol No.

Biv Sure you hain't?

Pol As I know you to be—

Biv Oh, little Dorcas; little Dorcas! Where is he—where is the murderer?

Pol Look at yourself, sir; blood on your sleeve, blood in your eyes, blood on your hands, blood—

Biv You're mad as a March hare; you're all crazy! Bivins a murderer? Billy Bivins, editor and proprietor? Shoo! Git out!

Hum out-side, which increases toward the end of the scene.

Pol In a moment you'll be taken. The neighborhood has been aroused; they advance with pitchforks. Run for your lives!

Biv Holy Moses Jerusalem, John Rogers; you don't mean it!

Pol Have you ears?

Biv But I don't understand. I know I'm mad, and you're mad, and the morgue's mad and Tipp and 'all of us—we're all mad!

Rushes to the morgue, collars Tipp and drags him to U R E.

Biv You—you rogue you, you've poisoned us all with stump water—you'll be hung higher than St. Paul!

Pol You have no time to lose! I love you still.

Biv (embrace C.) Polly! (U R E) Tipp, scoundrel, villian; come, we go to the devil!

Bivins collars Tipp and drags him off—farmers, snouting, rush on from the opposite side, armed with pitchforks, &c. Polly throws her arms about the morgue with a respectable scream.

QUICK CURTAIN.

here, (the chapel steps) and rest my weary bones. I am a poor, persecuted cuss, Mr. Tipp—a poor, persecuted cuss!

TIP I will rest beside you, Mr. B.

BIV No, Mr. Tipp, you will not rest beside me. It was all right for you to help me out of that duck pond, because I pay you six dollars a week; but you can not sit beside me in the shadow of this holy edifice. There's blood all over you! Why did you kill her, Tipp?

TIP It's madness to ask it, sir!

BIV Yes, Tipp, I am mad. People have been mad, are mad and will go mad, but a mader man than Billy Bivins never lived. (feigns madness) How's that? I trust the court will come forward with a plea of momentary insanity and let me go. (is seated)

Sound of voices within.

TIP Did you hear that!

BIV No, sir, I did not hear that! I tell you I'm a lunatic; I'm blinder than a bat and, therefore can not hear. (Tipp seats himself beside Bivins, who rises) No, no, Tipp, as I said before, I refuse to sit beside a Lucretia Borgia! Perch yourself upon the fence; you will find the top board very soft, Mr. Tipp. [sits down]

TIP [perched upon the fence] "Oh, when will this cruel war be over!"

Music within.

BIV Sweet, sweet music; how it reminds me of the scenes of my childhood, when the Bull Dog was yet a little pup!

TIP Mr. Bivins, are they having a love-feast in there?

BIV Mr. Tipp, let the gentle discords remind you of your guilt.

TIP Billy, don't you feel empty?

BIV Billy! I have been paying him six dollars a week since last June. He has floated in luxuries—actually floated; drank of the fountains of

wealth—literally gulped them in—and now when I am nobody from nowhere and on my way to don't know, he has the audacious audacity to call me Billy! Mr. Tipp, I forgive you. Sing, sweet music, sing softly to a mind displaced! Ah, me!

TIP Billy, dear boy, do you not feel a goneness?

BIV I do not feel a heaviness, Mr. Tipp; but we will starve together!

TIP I wish I was in heaven!

BIV Come down! Come down! If you reach Fiddler's Green you'll disappoint the man who's airing your bed in Kingdom Come! Come down!

Music stops.

TIP Church is out!

BIV So is Bivins! Out on the road—out in the cold! I'm a poor misguided orphan, Mr. Tipp, a poor misguided orphan!

Dora appears at the Chapel door, Tipp seeing her, and taking her for a ghost, falls backward from the fence, after the following speech:

TIP Ghost! Ghost! Take her away! Take her away!

Tipp scrambles behind the fence.

BIV Poor Tipp, that stump-water is getting the best of him. He's mad! Mad? We're all mad!

Tipp peeps over the fence and sees the ghost again, and makes a hurried exit after yelling:

TIP Ghost! Ghost!

Jeffrey appears at the Chapel door and prevents Dora from speaking.

BIV [standing up] Run, Tipp, run; but you can not run away from yourself! I pay him six dollars a week, and now he deserts me to the mercies of this cruel, cruel world. I wonder what the court will say when I take the box? (seated) The ladies will whisper, "That's him; that's Bivins! Isn't he sweet!" But I shall

not feel sweet; and when I am behind the bars, the female sex will cover me with flowers, buttercups and sweet-forget-me-nots, and I shall smile; but I shall not feel like smiling. I am glad Tipp escaped—Tipp would always pushing himself forward; he has so much cheek! I may appear so, but I do not feel cheeky. And when the day of execution comes, I will stand upon the scaffold, and say: (stands up) Ladies and Gentlemen: This is all that is left of Billy Bivins. No longer you hear the Bull Dog barking on the plains, in the cabin or in the bar-room! This is the candle you are about to give to the snuffers—snuff it gently! Applause! I loved little Dorcas, and even though she glided into what-not through an overdose of stump-water, it was no fault of mine! Loud and continued applause! Turn your eyes, ladies and gentlemen, upon this cringing, prostrate form; this despicable, despicable monstrosity, Tipp! Prolonged hisses! See in him the instrument of all my woes! At one rash moment he plunged his cursed steel into the heart of Billy Bivins, and the Bull Dog turned over on his back and kicked his gentle spirit into eternity! My great heart swells! I forgive him! Then the populous will hurl their sweaty night-caps in the air, and the ghost of little Dorcas, with gossamer wings, will hover over us.

Dora comes forward and embraces B.

DORA You dear, old Billy Bivins!
Bivins, freeing himself, crawls toward L R E.

BIV Ha, ha! Huzzah!

Enter Parson and Miller's Daughter.

DORA What's the matter, coz?

BIV (gesticulating frantically) Ha, ha! (exit—within) Help! Help! Ha, ha! Ho!

All rush to L R E.

PAR Is it a lunatic? I am a good man—ah; but are you sure it is a lunatic?

JEF I am afraid to offer a suggestion; but, by my life, he acts queerly!

DORA (laughing) Come here! There he goes, pell mell, over the fence, into the ditch! No, he clears it! Now he rushes for the underbrush! I vow he has lost his eyes with his better judgement, for in he goes head-first!

PAR The first blackberry steels his coat tails! Poor lunatic!

DORA He pushes the hazle aside!

PAR And it flies back and slaps him in the face! Insanity where is thy wit!

JEF I am all amazement, Dora dear!

DORA And I!

TIP (afar off) Billy! Billy!

PAR What's that!

JEF (to Dora) That's Tipp, coming back. Stand in the door-way of the chapel—undoubtedly it's I they fear—and when Tipp passes, speak to him. We will stand aside.

Dora takes the position as requested, Jeffrey, Parson and Miller's Daughter upon the porch of the parsonage.

TIP (nearer) Billy! Billy!

DORA Here he comes as if persued by the Furries!

PAR (to Jeff.) Is't another lunatic?

JEF Indeed, my good man, the woods are full of them. Stand closer!

PAR There's no danger?

JEF They are not so much persuaders as they are persued.

TIP (nearer) Billy! Billy!

DORA [who has been standing on tip-toes to better watch the coming Tipp] Poor Tipp, how woe-begone he looks!

TIP (just outside) Billy! Billy!

Enter Tipp, hat off and collar flying.

DORA (stepping down) Mr. Tipp!
TIP (rushing frantically to L R E) Take her away! Take her away! (exit)
JEF Mr. Tipp!
TIP [within] They can not say I did it! They can not say I did it!

All run to L R E.

DORA There he goes, over the same fence, into the same ditch—no. he clears it, and rushes for the underbrush!

TIP (afar off) Billy! Billy!

DORA In he goes at the same place!

PAR And if its not too dark, that same old blackberry steals a coat tail!

DORA He follows the beaten path!

PAR And the hazels slap him in the face!

DORA Poor Tipp!

TIP [scarcely audible] Billy! Billy!

PAR Poor lunatic!

JEF [with the rest, coming forward] This is beyond my comprehension!

DORA & PAR And mine!

JEF They are surely laboring under a delusion.

PAR Mad people always are, sir; unless they are stone mad. I have a book on the subject, which says in the second chapter—

JEF But, sir!

PAR What, sir!

JEF You don't understand!

PAR But the book—

JEF Hang the book!

POL [within] Tipp went this way!

ANN (within) I don't believe it!

PAR More lunatics!

JEF I tell you the woods are full of them.

AMY [within] Don't desert me, my dear; I'm going to faint!

DORA Aunt Amy! Oh, Lewis, it's Aunt Amy! [conceals herself behind the parsonage]

JEF (to Parson) Now, sir; the cloud will roll away.

PAR Where's the cloud?

JEF (to Dora) Don't be frightened, Dora dear; I shall have every thing explained. [coming forward] My friend what are you looking for?

PAR I am looking for the cloud.

Enter Aunt Amy supported by Polly and Anna, U L E.

JEF Well met, ladies!

AMY Hold me, my dears, I'm going to faint! (forgetting to faint) Mr. Lewis, my dear, good Mr. Lewis, we have been hunting high and low for you! Have you seen Dora; do you know where she is?

JEF I think she is beyond danger, Madam.

AMY Hold me, my dears; I'm going again!

JEF Ladies, I don't understand.

PAR No, ladies we don't understand. (aside) I never saw the woods so full of lunatics.

POL (supporting Aunt Amy) She has been murdered, sir; murdered!

PAR You don't say!

JEF That's hardly possible, ladies, unless you insist murder and marriage are synonymous.

POL We have been hunting for the corpse all afternoon and—

JEF And lost yourselves?

POL Yes, sir. Did Mr. Tipp pass this way?

JEF He did; whom do you suspicion of having committed so foul a deed?

AMY (reviving rather unnaturally) Vile Tipp! Vile Bivins! My dears—no, my dear, I'm not going this time.

Dora comes forward.

JEF Ladies, allow me to—

AMY Hold me, my dears; I'm going!

ANN Dora!

POL My dear woman, look up!

Polly allows her a sitting position—Dora kneels beside and takes her hand.

DORA Dear Aunt, I am safe; I am

here! Speak to me; forgive me!

AMY I have fainted, keep away from me!

DORA (taking Amy's hand) Dear Aunt, dear Amy; you couldn't blame us, you know! You know, dear Aunt, we always—well, my dear Aunt, if a person loves another—oh, my, you know—

Amy arises and embraces Dora.

AMY No I don't, hussy; you don't know what you're talking about—no more do I!

DORA But, dear Aunt—

AMY (Pushing her away) Don't but me, hussy—ungrateful, deceitful— (embraces Dora)

DORA We are expected to marry some day, Aunt.

AMY (same play) Who said you wasn't, hussy; you see, hussy, you don't know what you're talking about—and, hussy, we've been running Mr. Tipp and Mr. Bivins all over the United States, and we've had armed men running them, too, hussy; and here you've been sky-larking with—

JEF (laughing) Madam, allow me an explanation! This little girl is my wife; we were wed in yonder chapel—

AMY Hold me, my dears, I'm going again!

POL Hold yourself, mam! (crosses) Sir! Sir! Sir! What did you mean by telling me to watch Mr. Bivins?

ANN And me, sir!

AMY And me, sir!

Aunt Amy takes Dora aside and lectures her.

JEF So you would not watch me. "All is fair in love and war;" or, at least, so says the poet.

POL The poet, sir! The poet! And who was the poet! Do you know what you've done? You don't? (Dora escapes from Aunt Amy) Well, I'll tell you; you've busted one of the happiest unions this side of Adam and Eve!

JEF (embraces Dora) And formed one of the happiest!

POL I'm disgusted, sir!

JEF So am I!

AMY (crossing) Sir!

JEF As they say it at the barber's, "Next!"

AMY Sir!

JEF Madam, do not say what you may regret to unsay. What we are to each other, no power of words can alter. That I am worthy of her my character and station will explain; let that content you for the present. I assure you, you shall know all in time. Follow this good man into his parsonage—if the good man is willing?

PAR Perfectly, my dear boy.

JEF And I will search for the pursued (aside)—and if I can lasso them—will bring them here and straighten this mysterious affair.

POL Sir; you know—

JEF No more, Miss!

The Miller's Daughter leads the way into the parsonage, followed by Anna, Aunt Amy, Dora and the parson after the following:

JEF My good man, I shall repay you well.

PAR As I am a good man I believe it.

JEF By the way, speak well of me to the old lady?

PAR I'll have her settled before your return. (exit)

JEF Now for Messrs. Tipp and Bivins! (exit L R.)

With n.

Jo (drunk and singing)
A fish without a tail!

(Hic) A sturgeon for a whale.
Tra, la, loo; a whale! Hurrah for the whale! Dicky, shut up!

Enter Uncle Jo and Dicky U R.

Jo Dicky, hic! Dicky, it's getting late, and I wan't to (hic) to bed! Dicky, (hic) [sings]

Fishy, fishy, in the brook,
Go to thunder! Hurrah!

DICK Uncle Jo, you're awful full;
you won't be able to walk home to-
night—you're drunk and you can't de-
ny it!

JO You'd be drunk, too, if you'd
caught a whale (hic) that's been struck
by lightning, and had a fish pond hit
you in the back (hic) when you wasn't
looking. (sings)

A fish without a—whale,

A minnow (hic) for a—tail!

You'd be drunk, too! (hic) Tra, la,
loo, a Whale!

DICK Do you know, bum, my moth-
er 'll be waiting supper for me?

JO Don't go home drunk, Dicky!
Dicky—(hic)

DICK I know she'll, be waiting.

JO Let her wait; let her wait! (hic)
Let her wait!

DICK No, I won't; I'm going on
ahead, and you can get home the best
way you can, and I judge that's no
way at all.

JO All right, Dicky; don't put your-
self out on my account. I'm a poor,
old print, I am; I've been misled, I
have— (sings)

With a fish without a tail,

(hic) An't a whale and a sturgeon.
Hurrah, for the sturgeon! [stagger
back and lays down near the chapel
steps.] Good night, sweet (hic)—
good night!

DICK No, I won't leave the old man
either—poor old cuss! He's got his
head on a stone, and I flatter myself
it hain't as soft as it might be. (takes
off his coat placing it under Jo's head.)
His head will be big enough to-mor-
row from what's inside, so I'd better
keep the outside clear—poor old cuss!
(strokes his head and sings;)

"Go to sleep my baby!" &c

Enter Bivins and Tipp U. R.—both in a very
delapidated condition; Tipp's coat slit down
the back and one coat-tail missing—both of
Bivins'

BIV (C) Hist!

TIP Hist!

BIV Now, Tipp, when you see the
ghost, jump on it's back, and I'll—but
don't you worry about me!

DICK [singing.]

"Go to sleep my baby!" &c

BIV [getting behind Tipp] What's
that!

TIP O lor'; I don't know!

BIV [Pushing Tipp toward Dicky]
Go on, Tipp; go on! Remember, jump
on it's back!

DICK Is that you, Mr. Bivins?

TIP Dicky! The devil!

BIV [authoritively] Boy, what are
you doing here?

DICK Please, sir, Mr. Johnson, sir;
had an accident!

BIV Very common occurrence, boy;
very common!

DICK He's drunk, sir.

BIV Sweet oblivion—sweet obliv-
ion! Sonny, look in his inside pocket;
if there is no bottle there he hasn't
any. [Dick hands him an empty bot-
tle] He has! Let me have it, boy?
Oblivion, oblivion, sweet oblivion;
[tries to drink] alas, oblivion has found
a way into the bottle, before I found
the bottle!

Tipp passes the parsonage window during
the above four speeches, and makes a
discovery—within, Dora is surrounded by her
female friends and the parson, to whom, it
seems she is settling old debts with explana-
tions. He immediately makes known and ex-
hibits the discovery to M. Bivins.

TIP What's this! What—Dora
Dorcas talking, laughing! Eh? It's
true, because I see her; it's true be-
cause I hear her laughing!

Leads Bivins U. L.

TIP Hist!

BIV Hist! That's no ghost!

TIP We have been the subject of
a joke, sir.

BIV Shut up! Tipp you have made
a terrible fool of yourself!

TIP Mr. Bivins!

BIV Stand here, Tipp, and I'll turn

my talents to eaves-dropping.

Bivins enters the parsonage gate—crawls under the window, which is partly open—Tipp leans against the fence.

TIP Do you hear 'em, sir?

Laughing within.

BIV Tipp, you have made a perfect ass of yourself!

TIP I believe it; we have both—

BIV Shut up!

TIP Mr. Bivins!

Laughing within.

BIV What's this! The play! She knew we were going to read a play, because—Tipp had read it to her and told her so—that the leading lady was in name the same as herself—that she—Holy Moses. Jerusalem, John Rogers—Jeffrey put a bug in the ears of the uninterested parties to overhaul us, so—Jeremiah Hanover—so he could elope with her and marry her! Tipp, you'll be the laughing stock of the whole village! What's this! She was sure that her name-sake in the play would meet some terrible end, and—[laughing within] Christopher Columbus, Borneo, Sacramento—and—[laughing within] Damme, Mr. Tipp; damme—it was the play! [comes to U.C] They were at our elbows, dunce, taking it all in!

TIP You don't say so!

BIV No, sir; they said so! Have we, my noble play-wright, been wading duck-ponds, falling into ditches, bumping our heads against stone walls—have we, sir; and annihilating this Sunday-go-to-meeting outfit, which has dazzled the entire village of Jerryville for the last six months! Have we, play-wright, and for what—damme, sir; for a five act drama! We'll be the laughing stock of the whole world! We'll be pointed at, sneered at, scowled at, and the Whipoorwill 'll come out next week with six columns

of ridicule, headed: "The peculiar adventures of Billy Bivins, or The demoralization of the Drama in America!" And the Bull Dog, that has barked so victoriously in the past, will be compelled to stick his tail between his legs and slunk under a wash-tub; and all, sir—damme, for an emotional drama!

TIP Not so fast, Mr. Bivins; I have an idea!

BIV Think for me, Tipp; think for me—I'll sign my cross-bones to it.

TIP And take the credit of it, too. (aside) Say, we hasten home, change our clothes, bathe our wounds and when the ladies return they find us on the piazza smoking a brace of Havana's.

BIV You'll treat!

TIP I'll treat!

BIV I forgive you, Tipp! Shake!

TIP Thanks!

BIV It's an excellent idea; I'm glad I thought of it. Come on; no time to lose! Come on! (to Dicky) Boy, if any body asks you, if you have seen Bivins say, No, sir, ree! and I'll raise your wages. I wouldn't be caught here for fifty dollars! Come on, Tipp, we'll turn the tables; we will, indeed! It takes a whole regiment to corner Bivins, except, Tipp, in case of an emotional. Come on!

They meet Jeffrey U. R. E.

BIV Jerusalem, John Rogers!

JEF Gentlemen, I have been hunting for you! Come into the parsonage; the ladies await you there.

BIV Mr. Lewis—I mean, Jeffrey—I beg your pardon, but I have an engagement.

JEF You have!

BIV The fact is, Mr. Lewis—I mean, Jeffrey—Mr. Tipp has met an accident!

JEF (aside) They both look as if they'd met something!

BIV Yes, sir; we were about to sit

down to dinner, when we saw a Jersey Bull, on the other side of the hill, rushing toward our party with all the vehemence of a locomotive, and locomotive like, we rushed toward the Jersey! My dear Tipp was clutched in his fond embrace. You will observe that the left tail of his coat is missing, and that there is a minute opening down the back, running diagonally with the back-bone! Mr. Tipp, turn around!

TIP (aside) Am I a cartoon!

BIV And if you will observe further, this raiment which hangs so loosely about this noble form; noting the prospectus, or rear view, especially. (he turns his back to the parsonage and audience.)

Jeffrey goes to and opens the parsonage door, and motions the ladies to come out.

BIV (same position) Where did I leave off?

TIP At especially.

BIV (same position) The left tail of the coat remains!

Enter Dora, Anna, Polly, Aunt Amy, Parson and Miller's Daughter—All walk softly toward and stand behind Tipp and Bivins.

TIP You look amazingly from the rear, Mr. Bivins!

BIV (same position) Stupendous!

TIP Like a rabbit!

TIP (same position) Tipp, if I looked as hard as you—ha, ha, ha! The idea of losing one of your coat tails—ha, ha, ha! You see mine still float on the breezes. (tries to find them) Jerusalem, John Rogers, I've lost both of mine!

AMY Billy, you look top-heavy!

All laugh heartily.

BIV (turning) O lor'!

DORA (embracing Bivins) You

dear old Billy Bivins!

BIV Ah, little Dorcas.

TIP In the words of the poet. Caught!

BIV (embraces the ladies separately, then all at once.) My dear Aunt! My dear sister! My dear unknown! My dears!

"Don't view me with a critic's eye,

But pass my imperfections by!"

DORA You forgive me, coz?

BIV I forgive everybody; I embrace everybody! (embraces everybody) Except you, Mr. Jeffrey—I mean, Lewis—Jeffrey; that's it!

JEF I beg your pardon! I'm a your brother editor, as they would say it at the play, your cousin, too; who like unto the bird whose nest's been ravished of its mate, flew to the place of her imprisonment, and used all means both fair and foul to lure her back again. You have forgiven the cause, forgive the following disgrace?

BIV What a speech for Alazadam as he approaches Santiago by moonlight. Eh, Tipp? Old boy, I forgive you! Shake! (to U L) But don't say any thing about it! * .

TIP [U R] Hain't anybody going to ask my forgiveness?

BIV (crossing) Shut up! There's my delicious Polly Paulding! (crosses back.)

ANN I ask your forgiveness.

TIP (taking her hands) And we'll be married in the spring, won't we? All poets are wed in the spring.

ANN So you said this morning, sir.

TIP Spring's over! Take me as I am, at six dollars a week! (embrace)

BIV [leading Polly to U C] Mr. Tipp!

TIP Mr. Bivins, don't be so fresh!

BIV I forgive you! Polly dear, look at me! I am not so sweet as I was this morning, but I feel sweet; my great heart gallops for you.

And though my back
Looks out of whack,

It's not the coat tails which proclaim the man!

POLE I'll take you without them, Billy.

They embrace.

AMY (to Parson) Isn't it shocking, Parson!

TIP (with Anna crossing to U C.) Mr. Bivins!

BIV Mr. Tipp!

TIP I'm ashamed of you!

BIV Shut up! Friends and Subscribers: Before the curtain falls upon our modest comedy, I beg leave to inform you, the Bull Dog still barks; and when you are born—

TIP Go to college or out of town—

BIV Graduate with the highest

honors—

TIP Start in business—

BIV Get married—

TIP Have a birth or a birthday party—

BIV An accident—

TIP Or a divorce—

BIV Or pass in your checks—send us a postal—

TIP I'll write it up!

DICK & JO [Coming forward]
We'll set it up!

BIV And I'll take the credit of it!

CURTAIN.

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